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For Immediate Release - January 18, 2013

GOVERNOR PATRICK HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR TRANSPORTATION, EDUCATION INVESTMENTS TO GROW ECONOMY IN CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS & BEYOND

WORCESTER - Friday, January 18, 2013 – Building on his call for renewed investments in transportation and education in Wednesday's State of the Commonwealth Address, Governor Deval Patrick today visited Worcester to highlight the importance of these investments to building a 21st century education system and transportation network in Central Massachusetts and throughout the state.

The Governor's plan includes a \$1 billion annual investment in the Commonwealth's transportation system to maintain the current transportation assets we have today and launch a number of high-impact transportation projects across Massachusetts that, if built, will create thousands of jobs and spur economic development across the Commonwealth. The plan also includes a \$550 million investment in education, reaching \$1 billion over four years, to expand access to high quality educational opportunities and make higher education more affordable for all students in Massachusetts.

"Opportunity is too important to leave to chance, but opportunity requires growth and growth requires investment. Whether it's upgrades to Union Station, advanced manufacturing programs at Mt. Wachusett Community College or the new Life Sciences Center at UMass, the investments we make in Central Massachusetts are putting people back to work and expanding economic opportunity," said Governor Patrick. "Working with our partners in the legislature, business community and cities and towns, we will build on these investments and create a stronger Commonwealth for this generation, and the next."

"Governor Patrick has outlined a vision for this region and the entire Commonwealth," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray. "In Worcester and surrounding communities, we have seen investments pay off over the last several years thanks to a strong and effective partnership with the private sector and local, state and federal government. We need to build on this success and set the Commonwealth on a path towards growth to benefit this generation and generations to come."

In Central Massachusetts, the Governor's plan would allow for an \$11.1 million increase in funding for the Worcester Regional Transit Authority in FY14. Additionally, the Administration could commit funding to make improvements at the interchange of I-495 and I-90, and I-495 and Route 9, targeted reconstruction of Routes 9 and 20, reconstruction of Quinsigamond Avenue in Worcester and much-needed roadway resurfacing on Route 119 in Groton and Littleton.

MassDOT Secretary and CEO Richard A. Davey said in years past, transportation investment had been concentrated in the Boston area; but under this plan, that changes.

"The bulk of our 21st-Century Transportation Plan is focused on maintaining our current roads, rails and bridges," said Secretary Davey. "At the same time, we must continue to pursue investments that will result in real economic growth Commonwealth-wide. Our plan is ambitious but equitable, and will create a better, faster, safer transportation system today and in the future."

The Governor's plan would also provide access to high quality early education for the nearly 2,700 children in Central MA on the Department of Early Education and Care's (EEC) waitlist; allow additional resources for high-need schools in Worcester, Fitchburg and the surrounding communities to extend learning time for students; make higher education more affordable for tens of thousands of students attending colleges and universities in Central MA; and allow our community colleges like Quinsigamond and Mount Wachusett to expand successful programs that are preparing students for success in the workplace.

"We have the tools in place to help all of our students achieve at high levels," said Education Secretary Matt Malone. "These investments will fuel our continued efforts to build a 21st century public education system in Massachusetts that prepares all students to compete and succeed in the global marketplace."

“This year as in years past we will be facing fiscal challenges and will have to make tough decisions,” said Senator Stephen M. Brewer. “Moving forward we must all continue to work together to identify the best investments and the best plans for the future of Massachusetts.”

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